

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A color-image processing apparatus comprising:  
determination means for comparing color-image data stored in image storage means with a pattern stored in pattern storage means,  
wherein the color-image data stored in said image storage means is read with a predetermined timing, and determination by said determination means is performed.
2. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said color-image processing apparatus comprises a computer, and wherein said storage means comprises a hard disk.
3. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the color-image data is stored in said image storage means as a file.
4. An apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising alteration means for performing alteration for the color-image data when said determination means has determined that the color-image data coincides with the pattern.
5. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said pattern storage means, said image storage means and said determination means are controlled by an operating system, and wherein the operating system periodically performs the determination for the color-image data stored in said image storage means.

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6. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said image storage means stores color-image data corresponding to a plurality of images, and wherein, after determining the color-image data, said determination means records information indicating end of the determination in the determined color-image data.

7. An apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein said determination means does not perform determination for the color-image data where the information indicating the end of the determination has been recorded.

8. An apparatus according to Claim 5, wherein application software operating in the operating system assigns color-image data stored in said image storage means, and wherein said determination means determines the color-image data when reading the color-image data.

9. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the determination by said determination means is performed when an operation input of an operator is not provided for a predetermined period.

10. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the determination by said determination means is performed when a CPU (central processing unit) of said color-image processing apparatus does not execute application software.

11. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the determination by

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said determination means is performed when starting said color-image processing apparatus.

12. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the determination by said determination means is performed when copying the color-image data from an external storage device to said image storage means.

13. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the determination by said determination means is performed when copying the color-image data from said image storage means to an external storage device.

14. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the determination by said determination means is performed during communication of the color-image data with an external apparatus connected to said color-image processing apparatus via a network.

15. An apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the color-image data is stored in said image storage means as an image file, and wherein said determination means performs determination by obtaining bit-map data other than data buried within the image file in a format of a tag.

16. An apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein, when another operation input of the operator is not provided for a predetermined period after starting an operation input of the operator, determination processing by said determination means is resumed from color-image data for which determination by said determination means is not performed.

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17. An apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein, when the CPU of said color-image processing apparatus does not execute the application software after starting execution of the application software, determination by said determination means is resumed from color-image data for which determination by said determination means is not performed.

18. A color-image processing method for comparing color-image data stored in image storage means with a pattern stored in pattern storage means, said method comprising the step of:

reading the color-image data stored in the image storage means with a predetermined timing, and performing determination by the determination means.

19. A color-image processing apparatus, in which said color-image processing method according to Claim 18 is executed by a computer, and said image storage means comprises a hard disk.

20. A storage medium, capable of being read by a computer, comprising:

codes of a determination process for comparing color-image data stored in image storage means with a pattern stored in pattern storage means,

wherein the color-image data stored in the image storage means is read at a predetermined timing, and determination in the determination process is performed.

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21. A storage medium according to Claim 20, wherein the image storage means comprises a hard disk.